

## SIX AREAS OF GROWTH IN THE LORD



*Mr. Chevelle Bacon*

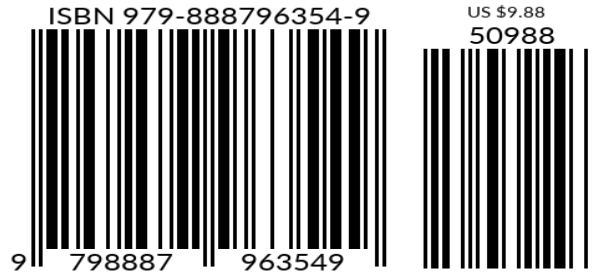
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### SIX AREAS OF GROWTH IN THE LORD

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Table of Contents

SIX AREAS OF GROWTH IN THE LORD .....	1
COPYRIGHT .....	2
SIX AREAS OF GROWTH IN THE LORD .....	2
THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST MINISTRIES LOGO .....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	3
SIX AREAS OF GROWTH IN THE LORD .....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	4
GROWTH, GAIN .....	5
G – Going beyond what I expect.....	5
As I sit praying and studying God's words, I have time to reflect on whom I am of everything that is around me family, friends, job, and culture.....	5
RISING EXPECTATIONS .....	6
R – Raising your expectations.....	6
Change takes effort forgetting about us and challenging the norm.....	6
OCCUPY TIME .....	7
O – Occupying your time with positive thoughts. ....	7
As I sit contemplating, thinking, observing, and viewing the actions that surround me-I realize that I will not-no, I cannot allow myself to become absorbed by what I see or hear.....	7
WARING – GO AGAINST.....	8
W-Wage a war on anything negative in your environment. Experiences are a part of everyday life. We all have varying experiences good, bad, positive, or negative. ....	8
THOUGHTS – MENTAL EXERCISE .....	9
T - Thought's – remember thoughts become things negative or positive.....	9
Don't wear as a garment what others have said about you because the devil will try to beat you down mentally. ....	9
HABITS – DAILY ACTIVITIES.....	10
H – habits – work to change negative habits – we should begin to realize our own habits. Is our spiritual growth measured by the sum of our experiences or is spiritual growth measured by our actions?.....	10

## SIX AREAS OF GROWTH IN THE LORD

### INTRODUCTION

This writing is far from an exhaustive (complete / finished) study on growth. However, this event is my testimony (written or spoken statement) of what the Lord has taught me, now in my life, about growth in the living God. Hence, in this writing I will attempt to show God at work in what I call the Six Areas of Growth. In 1970, at 12 years old God called my name and spoke to me in an audible voice and said, “pray unto me” and “read my Word.” After obedience to God's instructions, my life changed and the lives of 2 adults in the family. Over the years, I have witnessed first-hand the power of God to change, heal, deliver, and bless others. You cannot have an encounter with Christ Jesus and remain the same. In the years of ministering to others, I have noticed one main theme that occurs – the enemy (devil, demons) will attack when we are most vulnerable (defenseless) in childhood. I've seen people give their lives to God, yet they wrestle with themselves in dealing with the past issues of childhood. trauma and hurts, which untreated will and can stunt growth in God. I pray that my personal testimonies and scriptures referenced in this writing will encourage and bring a realization that God's love and power goes beyond anything we face in this life. God Bless.

As you study each section, you will need your Bible – Original - King James Version (KJV) USA-Public Domain. Note the chapter then the verse or verses – example, Psalms 23:1-2.

Chevelle Bacon

## GROWTH, GAIN

G – Going beyond what I expect.

As I sit praying and studying God's words, I have time to reflect on whom I am of everything that is around me family, friends, job, and culture.

As children of God, we want our lives blessed by God. The book of Psalms 1:1-6 makes the distinction between the godly and the ungodly. Growth in the Lord occurs when we have a desire to go beyond our understanding Isaiah 54:2-3. We must have a desire to reach God's requirements. We must realize the world's expectations are not God's expectations for the godly. 1 John 2:17 talks about physical desires, personal desires, and self-interests. James 4: 8 talks about drawing nigh to God and he will draw to you also, 2 Chronicles 15:2 and Jeremiah 29:11-14. The first stage of growth is a personal connection (relationship) with God through prayer and seeking His face (seeking the will of God in every area of our life.) During "our" prayer time we learn to go beyond our understanding. Growth occurs automatically as we go to God in prayer. You will be amazed at what God wants to do through and in you as you learn to surrender to God in prayer. Following scriptures, we gain much as we give(thanks, praise, and adoration) to God in prayer Jeremiah 29:11-13.

### **God will change a community and the atmosphere.**

1974, at 16 years old, I boarded a Greyhound Bus to visit my father in Boston, Mass. during a summer break. After my 3rd week of the being there, I was walking past some of my father's neighbors, gathered at one house. One of the neighbors got my attention and asked, "who are you"? I replied "I'm Theodore's son" he replied, "we know that but who are you" I asked "why." The man said to me "since you have been here we have noticed more love and unity between us, and we were discussing when exactly this change in the neighborhood took place and we realized it was after you arrived, so who are you?" At that time, I explained to him that "I'm a child of God." Thank God for His power to change.

### **Others will recognize God living in you.**

It was a warm summer day; I was walking to the exercise gym for my weekend workout. I noticed an elderly lady working on her bushes near the sidewalk. After this, I attempted to walk around her opposite side, but she stepped directly before me grabbed my right hand and kissed it and placed my hand on her head and said, "Bless me father." She saw God living in me. Thank God for salvation.

### **Thoughts for Discussion.**

As we continue in prayer and seeking His face, he will change areas and bring things to pass.

Following Jeremiah 29:11 what is? "to give you an expected end."

Following Jeremiah 29:12, what action causes God to hearken(listen)to us? What happens when we search for God with all our heart?

## RISING EXPECTATIONS

### R – Raising your expectations

Change takes effort forgetting about us and challenging the norm.

I was born in 1958, At an early age, my family taught me what they considered cultured. Before the age of twelve, my family introduced me to adult parties (house parties) dancing with adult women, drinking beer and coffee, cursing, and fighting everything a child should not do. At the age of 12, God called my name in an audible voice and changed my life since then I began to read the bible and pray as God instructed me. There is a difference in saying we love God as our Lord and Savior with our mouth, and loving God with our heart. Proverbs 4:23 tells us we must guard our heart for out of the heart come all vital matters also, 1 John 2:15-17.

#### **People will sometimes accept what they cannot or are not willing to change.**

God wants us to understand His divine love for us. The Bible states in John 3:16 which God gave his best that we might receive his best. After our first experience with salvation and if we continue to obey what I call simple faith (pray to God and read his Word – Bible) we should begin to see an area of growth and realization of who we are in God. As we come to the realization of who we are in God there should be areas of our life that we would change and what we cannot change we give it to God through prayer. As we walk in the newness of life, we're raising our expectations through simple faith and letting go of who we once were. Please read Ephesians 2.

#### **Thoughts for Discussion**

What does the word quickened mean? in Ephesians 2:1?

What does Ephesians 2:2 have to do with raising your expectations?

## OCCUPY TIME

O – Occupying your time with positive thoughts.

As I sit contemplating, thinking, observing, and viewing the actions that surround me-I realize that I will not-no, I cannot allow myself to become absorbed by what I see or hear.

**Contemplate** – focused thoughts/thinking with no conclusion, not coming to a decision. How many times have I sat and worried over the future of what I saw only to later discover that what I could not see God was working everything out for our good to protect me, and my family from hurts, harm, and danger.

### **The Furnace**

Coming into the warm season of 1986, the gas furnace in our house shut down – I discovered the pilot light was out. Because of this, I decided not to light it as we would have no use for the furnace as the weather was warming. As the weather began to cool months later, I decided it was time to change the furnace filter and light the furnace. We had paid our light and gas bill 3 days earlier. That morning as my wife was preparing breakfast the gas and the electricity was all of a sudden discontinued. As I ran to the back door, I noticed a service truck at the pole and another worker coming from the side of the house I asked “what are you doing? You're making a mistake we paid our bill 3 days ago!” The man said “take it up with the utility company.” Because of this, I phoned the company and the rep looked up our account and apologized, stating she would get someone out to restore us right away. After one of the workers returned, he restored the lights then as he attempted to turn on the gas, he ran in the back door and said, “don't touch anything, you have a gas leak in the house” He checked the furnace and said that the safety valve had malfunctioned and asked, "were you planning to light the furnace?" I replied “yes,” he said “if you tried to light the furnace you would have blown up the house and killed your entire family.” We may not have an answer to everything we see or hear, but the Bible tells us to be careful for nothing but in everything pray and give God your request. Also, occupy your mind with the right thoughts God will keep your heart and mind in peace through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-8.

### **Thoughts for Discussion.**

Through prayer, we can get delivered from negative things that people have done to us and negative opinions. Remember we never give others control of us through our thoughts.

Philippians 4:6-8 - how do we keep our peace?

Colossians 1:12-21- how did sin alienate us from God and make us enemies in our mind?

Psalms 19:14 – why is this prayer important?

## WARING – GO AGAINST

W-Wage a war on anything negative in your environment. Experiences are a part of everyday life. We all have varying experiences good, bad, positive, or negative.

As an 8-year-old child, God sent adults that noticed the call of God on my life and took time to nurture me in the scriptures. I remember my aunt's godmother said that I had the seal of God in my forehead and was going to be a preacher or prophet of God. I guess she was not the only one that noticed the call of God on my life, the enemy (Devil, Demons) noticed. Then, I experienced many hardships and attacks of the enemy except for the grace of God, I would not be here today to tell my story. After God came into my life, I understood my journey, and the enemy that opposed the God in my life.

### **The Boy at the pier**

9 years old the enemy once again tried to destroy my life. It was during a summer break, I went with my aunt and uncle to Wisconsin on a fishing trip. As I was at the pier observing the Lake, a boy about my age came to the pier, and we began to talk then, my uncle came to the pier got into his boat. Afterwards, the boy walked away to the middle of the pier, and a moment later, I observed the boy jump into the lake as if someone had pushed him. At that time, my uncle jumped into the lake and saved his life. As my uncle was bringing him out the lake, he said "he pushed me" pointing at me (I was about 12 feet away from him) thank God, my uncle was there and witnessed the event. This testimony is one of many that God has delivered me from – thank God for His grace. John 10:10 Enemy – steals, kill, and destroy. 1 Peter 4:12- think it not strange.

### **Bitterness of abuse**

I was 10 yrs old when I asked an adult (my grandmother) a question “when is my aunt coming to pick me up” the adult telephoned her 28-year-old son (a preacher) and told him I was worrying her with all these questions her son (the preacher) came over beat me in the face with his fists and threw me 8 ft across the room. From that point on no preacher could ever talk to me about God. Also, I developed a spirit of retaliation for the wrongs done to me.

### **Guard your heart**

To warfare effectively, we must guard our heart (Proverbs 4: 23) as well as our mind (Romans 12:2) The enemy will try to hinder us through people, places, and things. Romans 12:2 informs us not to pattern or conform to this world. We must renew our thinking, we must win the personal battle before we can wage effective warfare. The battle begins in us.

### **Thoughts for Discussion**

Proverbs 4:23 – why must we keep or guard our heart?

Romans 12:2 – why must we not conform? Ephesians 4:23 – mind? Philippians 1:27 – why is our conversation important? 1 Peter 4:12 – why is it important for us to understand this verse?



## THOUGHTS – MENTAL EXERCISE

T- Thought's – remember thoughts become things negative or positive.

Don't wear as a garment what others have said about you because the devil will try to beat you down mentally.

The enemy comes to kill our self-confidence and communication. I was 5 years old when I had an idea of something I was so excited to tell an adult (family member) but as I attempted to explain the idea the adult said to me “you're too stupid to have an idea.” From that point I began to shut down for communication and self-confidence. The enemy's, job is to kill your influence, steal your joy, and destroy everything that God created you to be. His job is not to make your life easy or encourage you he hates God and he hates mankind if we keep this in our thinking, we can effectively warfare against him.

### **The enemy comes to steal our trust in God's love for us.**

I was 9 years old when my grandmother sent me, and my cousin to the neighborhood candy store. Upon our return, the police was at the house as we were approaching, we heard my grandmother tell the police that I influenced my cousin run away with me. At that point, I felt that my existence in life was a mistake and that if there was a God, he made one mistake and that was creating me.

### **The enemy comes to destroy our faith that God wants the best for us.**

In 1979 at the age of 19 years old while on the job I would often pray in my spirit not verbally (not vocal) in my thoughts and mind. On this particular day, I felt in my spirit that the Lord was going to bless me so in my mind I kept repeating “I'm blessed” as this event was going on a co-worker came to me and said “you think you're going to be blessed God is not going to bless you.” I realized that by the enemy coming to tell me that God was not going to bless me meant that God is going to bless me because obviously the enemy knew that he had to try to thwart (destroy) the plan of God in my life.

### **Guard your heart.**

As a child, I knew nothing about guarding my heart. Then, I began to believe what others were saying about me, I began to see myself as a mistake, everything negative that the enemy said to me, I began to think about myself. John 10:10, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, Romans 8:6-7, 1 Corinthians 3:1, Galatians 5:19-21, Proverbs 4:23

### **Thoughts for Discussion.**

In order for growth to occur, we must not focus on the past.

Philippians 3:13 - What is the importance of this scripture?

John 10:10 – Why does the thief come? Who is the thief?

Galatians 5:19-21 – The flesh?

Romans 8:7 – Carnal (Flesh) what is the carnal mind?

## HABITS – DAILY ACTIVITIES

H – habits – work to change negative habits – we should begin to realize our own habits. Is our spiritual growth measured by the sum of our experiences or is spiritual growth measured by our actions?

### **Experiences - Healing**

When I was a child, I had varied experience's good and bad that shaped the way I viewed the world and people around me. Although, these experiences did nothing to shape my spiritual growth, I learned with one indelible fact the emotions I had inside left me confused, hurt, hateful, lustful, and vengeful. After God came into my life at age 12 yrs. old, I realized I had to release these areas to God in prayer, and my healing took years. Although, I live and surrendered everything in me to God, I still faced warfare the enemy attacking every chance he got. But, through warfare I learned how to pray without ceasing and God stepped in and performed mighty miracles for me, and my family on many occasions sparing our life on more than one occasion. So, I would say that our experiences do not make up spiritual growth but our reactions to those experiences if we allow can make us bitter with life and God or we can allow ourselves to seek God more for answers and solutions to the experiences we face in this life.

### **Action - A Separation from Worldly influence**

1 John 2:15-16– says if we admire the world the love of God is not in us. 12 years of age God began to speak to me about various issues in my life. As a child I thought as a child but God began to change me through reading His word and prayer-this event is what I call Simple Faith. God's word became a mirror for me to judge myself in relation to what God wanted for my life and prayer became my strength enabling me to walk and live my life for God beyond my family teachings. The first area God worked on in me was separating myself from those people and activities that weakened my faith and prayer life. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18, 1 John 2:15, John 15:19 In your effort to grow and make a positive change in your life you cannot wear as a garment the negative words and opinions that others have said about you.

### **Thoughts for Discussion.**

Enlarge – How do we enlarge according to Isaiah 54:3-4  
Explain why these scriptures are important to our growth.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18

1 John 2:15 John 15:19

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 – How does this scripture relate to experience?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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President and Senior Apostle of THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST MINISTRIES, INC. Established in 1994 by the direction of the Lord. Ordained 1981 by the CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST South Jurisdiction State of Indiana.

In 1970, at 12 years old God called my name and spoke to me in an audible voice and said, “pray unto me” and “read my Word.” After obedience to God's instructions, my life changed and the lives of 2 adults in the family. Over the years, I have witnessed first-hand the power of God to change, heal, deliver, and bless others. You cannot have an encounter with Christ Jesus and remain the same.

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